

JOHN J. FORD, JR.
Numismatist
170 HENRICKSON AVE.
ROCKVILLE CENTRE, L.I., N.Y.

May 15, 1961

Mr. George P. McNamee
McNamee Brothers Stores, Inc.
400 Washington Ave.
St. Louis 2, Mo.

Dear Eric:

My good friend, Paul Franklin, is very much interested in knowing the exact weight in grains of your original CSA Half Dollar. Do you have it, and could you give it to me? In addition, could you let us have all the data on this piece, the complete pedigree from the guy that got it in change, up to wherever you got it (B.G. Johnson?), when you got it, the Johnson JV or asking price (if not top secret), and what you feel it would be worth today, if for sale, which of course it isn't! All this is for a Franklin-Ford project, partly inspired by the recent article in "The Numismatist" (I guess); PF just asked me to get the weight for him, and to obtain (if possible) all the other data, and hold on to it. I'm not quite sure what he has in mind, but I can guess; in any event, I will give him nothing but the weight info at present. When I find out the whole score, I'll advise you in full, before releasing any information.

Does the reference to the "third" original specimen in "The Numismatist" write-up (the one in plastic, etc., reported stolen) mean anything to you?

The Boyd operation is coming to a head. I plan to spend most of my time on it from now on (no sales or lists this year). The big problem is what is Mrs. Norweb wants in the Massachusetts Silver, etc. Your long and continued patience will not go unrewarded.

There is a deal that might be available, if you have any money, and if I can get the notes. The rarest (and among the ~~the~~ ^{most} secret) Salt Lake City, Utah, Mormon notes were the "Counter-signed" Kirtland bills, issued initially on January 10, 1849; 250 of these were put into circulation by the fall of that year. They are regular Kirtland notes, countersigned by Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball and Newel K. Whitney, and having "secret mark" added by Thomas Bullock. According to the J. Y. Fox records, taken from files in the Church Historian's Office (pg. 68, "Utah Hist. Quarterly," January, 1952, "Coin and Currency in Early Utah," L. J. Arrington) only 20 C/S Kirtland notes were not redeemed and destroyed. Up to

Page 2 - Mr. Eric P. Newman.

February of this year, none were known to me or anyone else. Then, a descendent of one of the validators (name not yet positively ascertained), showed up with a hoard of six sets of 5 notes each (\$1., \$2., \$3., \$5. and \$10.), plus a few odd denominations, mainly \$5. notes, several in odd shapes. I bought one set, a California collector has another, one is given to the daughter of the finder and is not for sale, one is to be sold to Fred Marckuff, and the fifth is held by a guy who wants \$2,500. for it. The sixth set was assembled from notes that were sold to different people, and I believe is available. If I can get it, the price is \$1,550. net. I can't lay this out at present - having suddenly gotten involved in Flintlock and Percussion gun collecting, and in nice and deep re U. S. Martial items. I thought that you would like to know about this deal, as I can get the set and an extra note or two for that money, and I need the extra note(s) as varieties (plain and ANTI-FACKING notes).

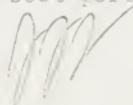
I have a hunch that the hoard represents notes outstanding, plus a few that showed up after the fire died down. The total of 256 issued in five denominations, keeps this series solid. The Mormon Temple Museum won't pay the \$1,500. asked them, but would like somebody to buy and donate them. I guess they will have to wait a long time. Remember, this is a "Prior Sale" sort of thing, as I haven't the notes to deliver, as yet, but hope to corral them.

Old man Brand has the Brasher Doubloon buried deep in a Safe Deposit Vault. I have three relatives working on him, and if I can lay my hands on the damn thing, you will have all the photos you want. Horace, of course, doesn't care about research, numismatists, women (any more), etc., etc., but only money, and even that only half interests him. Be patient here too!

How is the great expos' re the 1804 Franklin coming?

Say "hello" to your good wife.

Very best personal regards,



JJT:dn

4 Acton Street
Rochester, New York 14615
September 21, 1964

Miss Eva Adams, Director of the Mint
Treasury Department
Washington 25, D.C.

Dear Miss Adams:

In making a study of the gold coins struck in 1853 by the United States Assay Office of Gold, it has come to my attention that the defaced obverse and reverse dies used to strike the 1853 \$20 gold piece, .900 fine, may be still stored in the basement of the U.S. Mint at Philadelphia, although the original issue of this coin was struck in California. A picture of this coin is shown at the top of page 224 of "A Guide Book of United States Coins" by R.S. Yeoman, 18th edition, 1965.

I would appreciate it very much if you would ascertain if these dies are still stored in the Philadelphia Mint and, if not, is there any record of their whereabouts, or were they ever stored in the U.S. Mint at Philadelphia. Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

John Jay Pittman
John J. Pittman

JP/gc

October 13, 1964.

Mr. John J. Pittman,
4 Acton Street,
Rochester, New York 14615.

Dear Mr. Pittman:

This is in response to your inquiry of September 21st, concerning the coinage of the United States Assay Office of Gold in 1853, specifically the \$20 piece.

A statutory provision enacted September 30, 1850, provided that the Secretary of the Treasury should contract with "the proprietors of some well established assaying works now in successful operation in California" to perform duties in assaying and fixing the value of gold in grains and lumps, and in forming the same into bars. This work was to be done under the supervision of a United States Assayer to be appointed by the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate. He was to cause to be affixed to each bar or ingot of gold issued from the establishment the stamp of the United States indicating the degree of fineness and value.

Under this authority Augustus Humbert was appointed the Assayer of gold in California and a contract was entered into by the Secretary of the Treasury with Moffatt and Co. of San Francisco. The contract was made by the Secretary of the Treasury and the Assayer was under the supervision of, and reported directly to the Secretary. He had no connection with the Mint and we have no knowledge of records on this coinage or information concerning eventual disposition of the dies.

It is possible that reports made by this company to the Secretary of the Treasury are in the National Archives in Washington, D. C. Officials there will be glad to cooperate with you in this matter if you desire to write them about it.

Sincerely,

Eva Adams
Eva Adams
Director of the Mint

4 Action Street
Rochester, New York 14615
October 22, 1964

Miss Eva Adams, Director of the Mint
Treasury Department
Washington 25, D.C.

Dear Miss Adams:

Thank you for your letter of October 13rd in response to my inquiry of September 21st concerning the coinage of the United States Assay Office of Gold in 1853, specifically the \$20 piece.

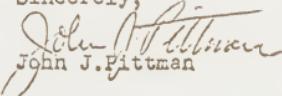
I am familiar with most of the information you stated in your letter. However, I was disappointed to learn that you "have no knowledge of records on this coinage or information concerning eventual disposition of the dies". I had hoped that the dies were at the Philadelphia Mint or had been placed in the Smithsonian Institution.

My reason for believing that the dies were still at the Philadelphia Mint was based on information I obtained in the 1913 publication by Edgar H. Adams entitled "Private Gold Coinage of California, 1849-1855". In section IV of this book, "Pattern and Experimental Pieces of California 1849-1853", pages 104-106 (copies enclosed), Mr. Adams states, "The foregoing (83-90 inclusive) are all from dies which are now in the Philadelphia Mint cabinet." Item 84 is described by Mr. Adams, "1853, Twenty Dollars. Obverse, From the reverse of Humbert's regular Twenty Dollar piece of the year. Reverse, Blank. Lead, and unique."

Since Mr. Adams is considered an authority on the private gold coinage of California, I would appreciate it if you could ascertain whether the 1853 \$20 U.S. Assay Office of Gold die, and any other California gold coinage dies, are at the Philadelphia Mint, or if records show that they ever were there. If the records show that they were there but are not there now, do the records show that they were transferred to the Smithsonian Institution when the National Coin Cabinet was transferred to the Institution?

Thank you for your suggestion that I write to the National Archives for more information about the coinage of Augustus Humbert. I will do this. Thank you very much for your help. I will be looking forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,


John J. Pittman

November 17, 1964.

Mr. John J. Pittman,
4 Acton Street,
Rochester, New York 14615.

Dear Mr. Pittman:

I have before me your further letter of October 32nd, concerning the coinage of a \$20 gold piece by the United States Assay Office of Gold in 1853.

An additional search was conducted, in light of the information your letter contained, but there is nothing I can add to my previous correspondence. No California gold coinage dies are in the Mint nor correspondence pertaining to them. Neither are any of these dies at the Smithsonian Institution.

I am sorry that we cannot assist you.

Sincerely,

"Signed" Eva Adams

Eva Adams
Director of the Mint

New Netherlands Coin Co., Inc.

SUITE 401
1 WEST 47TH STREET
NEW YORK 36, N. Y.

PHONES PLAZA 7-5245-6

January 18, 1965

Mr. Eric P. Newman
6450 Cecil Ave.
St. Louis 5, Mo.

Dear Eric:

I have noted carefully your comments on the USAOG matter in your letter of January 7th.

In spite of all your claims to the contrary, I am of the opinion that the establishment or "group" (or whatever you want to call it) is conducting a secret investigation. I do not have the time to play games, and if I am to share the information that I arrive at objectively, I feel that you should do the same. Of course, if this is not an objective investigation, and if the possibility exists that personalities are involved, I see no reason why you should not keep secrets. George Fuld was sure enough of himself, to make statements in writing and to me over the telephone, to cause Dr. Sloss to call Charles Wormser, to inspire an article in a numismatic newspaper, and to deal directly with the Secret Service. If I am not to know the basis for all this, outside of some wild-eyed allegations by Mr. Sol Kaplan, I think very little of what you are doing.

I do not have the time, Eric, to play games. If the people that you are affiliated with do not wish to let me in on their information or data, I see no reason why I should proceed, until their case (or yours) is completed. I have to have something to shoot against, particularly since I believe the pieces in authentic!

I am not angry any more, Eric, and I am willing to play ball but it does take "two to tango."

Very best personal regards.

Sincerely,

John F. Ford, Jr.

JJF:dn

If had either
Note or film
I do not & loss these
prints

9/2/86

Hoping this is of some
use to you.

~~Anthony~~
Terranova